

# TMDL Implementation Plan for Chattahoochee River, Downstream of W.F. George -- Dissolved Oxygen

## Introduction

The portion of the Chattahoochee River downstream of the Walter F. George Reservoir, is located a short distance west of Fort Gaines, Georgia, which is about 30 miles west of Albany, Georgia. The Walter F. George Reservoir dam is operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District. Reservoir water flows through the turbine generators in the dam to produce hydroelectric power. The water for such use is taken from the lower (hypolimnion) zone of the Reservoir where the water is naturally lower in dissolved oxygen (D.O.).

## Plan for Implementation of the TMDL

The TMDL for this and seven other low D.O. river segments below dams, was finalized in November, 2000. The designated use for the Chattahoochee River downstream of the dam for the Walter F. George Reservoir, is for fishing. The applicable water quality standards there for D.O. are a concentration of 5 milligrams per liter (mg/l) as a daily average and a concentration of 4 mg/l as a minimum value. Attainment and

maintenance of these two D.O. water quality standards are the goals of this Implementation Plan.

The TMDL recommends that the appropriate federal and state agencies work together in developing an implementation strategy to provide higher oxygenated water from these dam releases. The TMDL adds that these strategies may include oxygenation or aeration of the water, redesigned spillways, or other measures, and that ongoing water quality monitoring is needed to monitor progress.

The Corps of Engineers just finished a feasibility report on aeration at the Walter F. George dam. Rehabilitation of the turbines is ongoing. The Corps expects that by late summer of 2001 one of the following systems will be chosen: (1) an aeration system (using compressors and forced air to add air to the water as it passes through the turbines); or (2) an oxygen or air diffuser system (injection of oxygen or air into the reservoir water immediately above the dam). The design target for the aeration or diffuser system will be the D.O. water quality standards (5 mg/l as a daily average and 4 mg/l as a minimum value).

EPD will work with EPA to set up periodic meetings with the Corps of Engineer on this and the other TMDL segments where river segments below Corps dams are not meeting water quality standards for D.O. This is the approach recommended in the

TMDL. The purpose of this process is to seek to reach agreement on a schedule for implementing solutions on the D.O. non-compliance, to track progress on improvement measures, and to provide input as needed, until water quality standards for D.O. are met.

A summary of the Implementation Plan is as follows.

**A. Source categories, subcategories, or individual sources which must be controlled to implement the load allocations:** Dam immediately upgradient.

**B. Description of regulatory or voluntary actions, intended to achieve reductions:** Continued monitoring at same locations, plus work with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and EPA to develop plan for aeration or diffuser system when power generation turbines in dam are operating.

**C. Description of regulatory or voluntary actions, including management measures or other controls, by governments or individuals, that provide reasonable assurance that reductions will be achieved to meet water quality standards:** See previous response. Aeration system design must have target of full compliance with D.O. water quality standards.

**D. Schedule for implementing the management measures or other control actions as expeditiously as practicable:** Will set up first meeting with EPA and COE as soon as feasible, and seek to

obtain agreement on an implementation schedule as expeditiously as practicable.

**E. Projected attainment date and basis for it:** The projected attainment date is on or before 2006, for this Implementation Plan.

**F. Measurable milestones for determining whether management measures or other control actions are being implemented:**

Periodic re-evaluation of D.O. data will be undertaken, to confirm or refine the projections. If an agreement is reached with the COE on a schedule, that schedule will include appropriate milestones.

**G. Monitoring or modeling plan designed to measure the effectiveness of the management measures or other controls, the progress the water body is making toward attainment, and a process for implementing stronger and more effective management measures if necessary:** Periodic monitoring will be conducted using the same methodology and analytical approach as before. An aeration or diffuser system for the power generation turbines is believed to be the most effective and feasible approach for meeting D.O. standards below this dam.

**H. The criteria to determine whether substantial progress toward attainment is being made, and if not, whether the TMDL needs to be revised:** The criteria are the in-stream D.O. analyses, from samples taken at the same locations as for data collected in the

past. If compliance is not achieved after the aeration or diffuser systems are installed and operating properly, the Implementation Plan will be revised as appropriate, based on facts known at that time.

**I. Goal of attaining and maintaining the applicable water quality standards within 10 years, where that is practicable:**

That should be accomplished, for this segment.